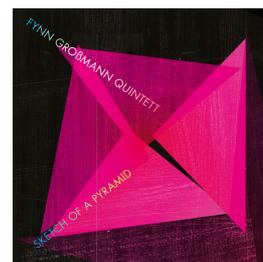




SKETCH OF PYRAMID (digital)
FYNN GROSSMANN QUINTETT
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FYNN GROSSMANN QUINTETT || SKETCH OF PYRAMID

...then they started playing, and everything was okay. No, we will not be talking about the never-ending lockdown that weighs upon every aspect of life and the arts, not to mention the last fragile remnants of everyone's sanity. The Fynn Großmann Quintet celebrates life, simply because it is worth living. If every ounce of what we love in jazz music could be distilled into one record, this is it. Not that the band was aiming for this; for bandleader and saxophonist Fynn Großmann, where music lives is in the melody.

Many albums build bridges from jazz to other genres, attempting to bring those with little listening experience (or even strong reservations) into the world of jazz. Großmann and his crew take a different approach, by throwing themselves fully into the jazz idiom. Here, there's no need to lead the listener to the music. Instead, the band uses the wide spectrum of artistic expression inherent in jazz music to bring the listener as close to the action as possible. Großmann's motto is an invitation: "I don't want to distance

myself from listeners, who don't have a jazz education. Personally, I prefer music that encourages me to participate and seeks a connection."

In other words, Fynn Großmann and his quintet only create music that they would also listen to. With a personality as charismatic as his songs, the young Hanoveran surrounds himself with four like-minded jazz musicians, each of them with their own exciting projects and career paths. And not only does everybody check their egos at the door, but dive into the music with a refreshing adventurousness, worried not about fitting into a specific genre but focusing on crafting the music together as a team.

With fellow saxophonist Phillip Dornbusch, Großmann forms a single, nearly symbiotic entity. There are none of the infamous "saxophone battles" to be found here. Rather, the two understand and adopt the other's intentions and ideas with such a blind understanding of each other that it often becomes difficult to hear who's playing what. This becomes all the more impressive when considering that Dornbusch plays tenor and Großmann alto saxophone. Bassist Clara Däubler has become an icon of the young Hanoveran jazz scene. She is a wonder of improvisation and spontaneity, her straight grooves so precise that she can allow herself any conceivable freedom without distracting from the matter at hand. Pianist Marko Djurdjevic brings a detail-oriented approach to the ensemble. When a song is 95% finished, he is the one to find the missing elements to bring it to completion. He always has a musical ace up his sleeve to give each track the surprising but subtle twist it needs. Finally, drummer Johannes Metzger is the perpetual engine of the band, pulsing inexhaustible energy and life into the band, often even directing the dynamic dramaturgy of proceedings himself. The five musicians have no need to plan their way through every tune, since each band member's character, artistic vision and personal motivation fits perfectly into the group.

Originally from Flensburg, Großmann grew up with the sounds of the far north. He loves jazz from Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Finland, but instead of the notorious nordic melancholy, he adopts a hanseatic cheerfulness and civility. "I spend almost all of my time in northern Germany," he says. "I like the mentality and sometimes get the feeling, the clocks run slower this far north. People take the time to do the things they really enjoy. A lot of people think that northern Germany stops at Hamburg, for us in Flensburg, that's still southern Germany! But when I think of northern music, I mainly think of folk songs and not jazz."

The northern influence is audible; while stylistically Großmann is far from northern folk, the clarity and accessibility of what he plays is distinctly folkloristic. The carefree lightness of the music gives the world a fabulous aura of wonder, where there is no right and wrong. He brings with him the deep seated, raw desire for pure musical expression that most children lose in elementary school. The positivity of the music comes from a conviction that we are defined by the actions we take, and never by those we do not.

Großmann's empathy for his listeners' desires is also shown in "Sketch of a Pyramid". The EP was the norm in jazz until the mid-1950s, but the full album has taken over since then, more often than not at the cost of stringency. Großmann returns to the 4-track EP, convinced of the format's virtue. "We recorded ten tracks, but decided to only release four of them. The feeling was that we, and our listeners, would get more out of more frequent smaller releases. I often catch myself listening to three or four songs on an album, then I think, that's enough, I'll listen some more later. We all want to be heard in that which we create. Maybe this is our reaction to a faster moving world."

Fynn Großmann and his quintet are ambassadors. Heralds for the good in jazz, music, and the arts in general. With four instrumental tracks, they capture the precise sentiment the written words often so painfully struggle to express...and then they started playing, and everything was okay.

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